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**LOCKE'S LATITUDINARIAN SYMPATHIES:  
An exploration of sentiment in Locke's moral theory**

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*Abstract:* For Locke, as the standard story goes, good and evil assume a specifically moral significance only by dint of their being attached to divine legislation. This would seem to leave little to no role for intrinsically *moral* motives to play in reasoning practically about one's moral duty. However, a re-examination of certain of Locke's texts, particularly against the backdrop of the seventeenth-century Latitudinarian tradition, suggests that Locke is not uniformly committed to an externalist account of motivation. There are a number of instances throughout Locke's works, I want to show, where he refers not only to the inherent righteousness of moral law as reason-giving for moral agents, but also to particular moral feelings as motivating moral acts.

The idea for this paper arose from two somewhat puzzling claims regarding Locke's moral philosophy. The first such claim is found in Catharine Trotter Cockburn's *Defence of Mr. Locke's Essay*, written in 1702. In this work, Cockburn defended John Locke against Thomas Burnet, a prominent thinker in his day who published three critical pamphlets aimed at Locke's empiricist theory of ideas and its implications for theology and morality. According to Burnet, Locke's commitment to empiricism prevents him from developing any robust conception of morality and moral motivation. Burnet's specific worry was that Locke's account of morality provided only a voluntaristic, and thereby arbitrary, basis for moral rules and relied upon a strictly hedonistic account of moral motivation. Burnet himself subscribed to a proto-moral sense theory, according to which humans possess an internal mechanism by which we immediately sense the moral right and wrong of actions, and this prior to any practical reasoning whatsoever (a view he makes abundantly clear in his pamphlets on Locke). Cockburn responded to Burnet's concerns in the *Defence* by acknowledging an indispensable role for moral sensibility, but expressing some skepticism that it could

possibly operate ‘without ratiocination’.<sup>1</sup> In this vein Cockburn states that ‘this sudden affection in moral cases is indeed of excellent use, when it is once set on work by an enlightened judgment, to keep up the distinction of good and evil; to incite, or to be a check upon men’s actions’.<sup>2</sup>

The second source of inspiration for the present discussion is more recent. In his 1953 article ‘The Importance of Shaftesbury’, Ernest Tuveson asserts that Shaftesbury’s conception of the affections betrays Locke’s influence. In the course of his discussion, Tuveson claims that ‘Locke even hints at a kind of moral sense’,<sup>3</sup> citing as an example Locke’s account of shame (an ‘uneasiness of the mind upon the thought of having done something which is indecent’).<sup>4</sup> The suggestion, both in Cockburn and in Tuveson, is that Locke’s account of morality makes room for specifically *moral* sentiments. What is striking about such views is that there seems to be little, if any, other literature that proposes a connection between Locke’s moral theory and sentimentalism of any stripe. Indeed, to many who have considered Locke’s moral views, the suggestion seems not merely controversial, but outright mistaken, notwithstanding the fact that Cockburn’s *Defence* succeeded in earning the explicit endorsement of Locke himself.<sup>5</sup>

The prevailing view of Locke’s moral theory is not dissimilar to the picture painted by Burnet in his critical pamphlets: Locke’s morality sits squarely in the egoistic/hedonistic tradition of moral philosophy, offering a legalistic account of moral rules and an

<sup>1</sup> Cockburn, *Defence*, 76.

<sup>2</sup> Cockburn, *Defence*, 77.

<sup>3</sup> Tuveson, ‘The Importance of Shaftesbury’, 281.

<sup>4</sup> Tuveson, ‘The Importance of Shaftesbury’, 281.

<sup>5</sup> Locke wrote as follows in a letter to Cockburn dated December 30, 1702: ‘Give me leave...to assure you that as the rest of the world take notice of the strength and clearness of your reasoning, so I cannot but be extremely sensible, that it was employed in my defence. You have herein not only vanquished my adversary, but reduced me also absolutely under your power’. Locke, *Selected Correspondence*, letter 3234, 308–9

account of their motivational force in terms of the rewards and punishments associated with divine commands. This interpretation of Locke is, of course, well-founded in his texts. Locke unambiguously locates moral obligation in the juridical relationship between God, as lawmaker, and humans, as subjects, and he describes the motivation to obey as founded in the sanctions God, as ruler, attaches to his laws. Locke is explicit that the fear of punishment and the desire for reward that motivate moral action are generically of a piece with the pleasures and pains that motivate *all* human action. For Locke, an agent's reasons for acting, in any context, have to involve considerations of self-interest, construed broadly hedonistically.

J. B. Schneewind, for example, develops this interpretation, explaining that for Locke the relevant pleasures or pains motivating moral action are merely a species of *natural* pleasure or pain: 'To call a voluntary action morally good is to mark its conformity to a law which the lawmaker backs by attaching natural good to compliance and evil to disobedience'.<sup>6</sup> Stephen Darwall and John Colman similarly hold that Locke locates moral motivation in natural goods and evils in the form of divine sanctions. Colman, for example, argues that Locke 'distinguishes between our having moral obligations and our having reasons for discharging those obligations. The reasons he emphasizes are the rewards and punishments God has attached to the observation or neglect of the law of nature'.<sup>7</sup> In a like vein, Darwall writes that, for Locke, 'what makes God's commands morally obligatory [i.e. God's authority] appears...to have nothing intrinsically to do with what makes them rationally compelling';<sup>8</sup> it is 'the hope of divine reward and fear of punishment [that] make obedience be in the agent's rational interest'.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Schneewind, 'Locke's Moral Philosophy', 202.

<sup>7</sup> Colman, *John Locke's Moral Philosophy*, 72.

<sup>8</sup> Darwall, *The British Moralists*, 37.

<sup>9</sup> Darwall, *The British Moralists*, 39

The idea that Locke locates moral motivation in considerations of pleasure and pain is, as I have suggested, well supported by the texts. Most notable in this regard is the following passage from *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (hereafter, referred to as *E* or the *Essay*), where Locke, in no uncertain terms, ties his specific conceptions of *moral* good and evil to those of good and evil, generically understood:

Good and Evil...are nothing but Pleasure or Pain, or that which occasions, or procures Pleasure or Pain to us. *Morally Good and Evil* then, is only the Conformity or Disagreement of our voluntary Actions to some Law, whereby Good or Evil is drawn on us, from the Will and Power of the Law-maker; which Good and Evil, Pleasure or Pain, attending our observance, or breach of the Law, by the Decree of the Law-maker, is that we call *Reward* and *Punishment* (*E*, II.xxviii.5, 351)<sup>10</sup>

Locke would seem to be suggesting here that good and evil assume a specifically moral significance only by dint of being attached to divine legislation, and this is how he has often been understood in the scholarship. This would seem to leave little to no role for intrinsically *moral* motives to play in reasoning practically about one's moral duty. It might be tempting, therefore, to conclude that Cockburn and Tuveson were simply mistaken about Locke, led astray, perhaps, by interpreting him through the lens of their own intellectual commitments.

In what follows, I will argue that such a conclusion would be too hasty. A re-examination of certain of Locke's texts, particularly against the backdrop of the seventeenth-century Latitudinarian tradition, suggests that Cockburn and Tuveson may have been picking up on an important but underappreciated theme in Locke's work. Locke, it seems, is not uniformly committed to an externalist account of motivation. There are a number of instances, throughout his works, where he refers not only to the inherent righteousness of moral law as reason-giving for moral

<sup>10</sup> References to Locke's *Essay* are to book, chapter, section, and page numbers from the Nidditch edition.

agents, but also to particular moral feelings as motivating moral acts. The latter are of particular interest for this paper.

There is a proto-moral sense tradition that begins far earlier than Shaftesbury, who is generally considered the originator of Sentimentalism. A nascent form of sentimentalist thinking can be traced at least as far back as the writings of Cambridge Platonist Ralph Cudworth in the mid-1600s and finds robust expression in the Latitudinarian tradition he has been credited with inspiring.<sup>11</sup> This intellectual movement was committed to internalist ideals of moral agency and the motivating influence of sentiment in moral decision-making, and Locke, I will show, seems to have imbibed some central aspects of this moral perspective. This should come as no surprise if we consider that many of the major voices in this early movement were not only members of the Royal Society but thinkers whom Locke counted among his closest friends.<sup>12</sup> For example, one of Locke's most significant friendships is with Cudworth, whose views I will explore in greater detail below.

<sup>11</sup> The connection between Latitudinarianism and eighteenth-century sentimentalism has been made in a number of papers, most notably Crane (1934), Darwall (1995), de Bruyn (1981), Fiering (1976), Gill (2004; 2006), Herdt (2001), Humphreys (1948), and Tuveson (1948; 1953). While it may be the case that the language of sentiment is not exclusive to the Latitudinarians of this period, this paper will concentrate specifically on Latitudinarian sentimentalism as having formed the intellectual milieu within which Locke was working. The Latitudinarians are important figures in this period, developing as they did the notion of sympathy in the context of interpersonal relationships as a basis for moral and religious life.

<sup>12</sup> The Latitudinarian influence is far from limited to moral attitudes. B. J. Shapiro discusses the connection between Latitudinarianism and early modern science and epistemology. Shapiro provides a lengthy census of Latitudinarian sympathizers, including William Lloyd, Edward Stillingfleet, Simon Patrick, Joseph Glanvill, John Tillotson, John Wilkins, Gilbert Burnet and Lord Ashley. Shapiro traces a general commitment to principles of toleration, scientific rigour, and linguistic precision in the Latitudinarian tradition that all find their way into Locke's writing. As Shapiro points out, this influence can be drawn through Locke's intimate connections: 'Locke, like so many virtuosi members of the Royal Society, not only numbered Boyle, Tillotson, Barrow, Cudworth and Patrick among his intimate friends, but adopted the rational theology typical of the group and supported the comprehension schemes which they promoted'. (Shapiro, 'Latitudinarianism and Science', 32) John Marshall also discusses Locke's intimate connections within the Latitudinarian community, noting not only his personal friendships with key players, but an extensive library of their individual works. (Marshall, 'John Locke and Latitudinarianism', 253–54)

My intention in what follows is not to make a full-blown case for the direct influence of Cudworth or any of the seventeenth-century divines on Locke's thinking (though there are, I would argue, ample grounds on which to build such a case). I want, rather, to point to an aspect of Locke's moral theory that I think comes into clearer focus once we acknowledge emergent strains of sentimentalism as early as Cudworth. Recognizing this strain in Locke's thinking brings together two elements of Locke's morality that have, up to now, been thought to diverge in a seemingly problematic way. On the one hand, Locke is committed to an ideal of individual self-determination in matters of morality—a view that has been classified as broadly internalist by Stephen Darwall for its emphasis on internal, self-guiding mechanisms in moral decision-making. However, Locke seems to part ways with this internalism when it comes to moral motivation. As Darwall writes, 'although will, for Locke, somehow involves a conception of internal authority, his moral psychology requires that the latter be motivationally inert'.<sup>13</sup> I want to suggest that this tension is resolved once the full extent of Locke's motivational internalism is appreciated. The story is not a straightforward one, for externalist motivation does play an integral role in Locke's broader theory, but there is a role, and I believe a very important role, for motivational internalism in his account.

### **§1. Seventeenth-century Sentimentalism**

'Latitudinarianism' is a term used broadly to encompass the ecumenically-minded Anglican divines in the post-Restoration period who resisted the Calvinistic and Hobbesian pictures of morally-corrupted human nature. The term covers a broad range of theologians and philosophers, mainly emanating from Cambridge, and linked, particularly in its earliest incarnation, with the Cambridge Platonists Henry More and Ralph

<sup>13</sup> Darwall, *British Moralists*, 172.

Cudworth.<sup>14</sup> The views by which the members of this group are united include a general commitment to ideals of intellectual rigour and inquiry characteristic of the new science, inter-denominational toleration and compromise, rationality and the repudiation of dogmatism, and the essential moral goodness of human nature.<sup>15</sup> The spirit of tolerant, broad-minded inquiry that marked both the new science and Latitudinarianism lent itself, one might argue, to a revisioning of human nature and human potential. These thinkers seem to have taken their cue generally from the Cambridge Platonists' views regarding the intrinsic goodness of human nature and the centrality of love to our moral lives. Cudworth, notably, took up the term 'sympathy', which up to that point was a strictly scientific term referring to hidden affinities between things, and applied it in a moral context.<sup>16</sup> As Jennifer Herdt explains, 'sympathy became [with Cudworth's novel usage] a way of affirming God's connection with the world

<sup>14</sup> In his *History of his Own Times* (volume 1 of which was originally published in 1679) the Latitudinarian Bishop Gilbert Burnet credits the 'set of men at Cambridge', including Cudworth and More, with ushering in ideas of tolerance and anti-dogmatism. Their detractors, he explains, were 'of narrower thoughts and fiercer tempers [and] fastened upon them the name of Latitudinarians' (Burnet, *History*, 188). One such detractor, Simon Patrick, had written, in his 1662 pamphlet *A Brief Account of the New Sect of Latitude-Men*, of the 'poisonous ideas', like liberty of conscience and rational religion, arising out of the University of Cambridge (Patrick, *A Brief Account*, 1). Alan Gabbey offers a useful discussion of Patrick's pamphlet and his intention of pinpointing the Cambridge Platonists; see his 'Cudworth, More and mechanical analogy', 109–10.

<sup>15</sup> B. J. Shapiro traces the alliance of Latitudinarianism and early modern science, writing 'the two movements ... shared a common theory of knowledge, and members of both became the principal proponents of a rationalized religion and natural theology. In their respective areas both scientists and theologians sought a *via media* between scepticism and dogmatism. On the scientific side this search resulted in an emphasis on hypothesis and a science without overt metaphysics. In spiritual matters it led to an emphasis on broad fundamentals and the eschewing of any detailed orthodox theology claiming infallibility' (Shapiro, 'Latitudinarianism and Science', 35)

<sup>16</sup> The following discussion will concentrate on Cudworth's views, however this is not to diminish the importance of Henry More, another Cambridge Platonist whose *Enchiridium ethicum* was an enormously influential work of proto-sentimentalist ideas. For the purposes of my discussion of Locke, Cudworth is taken as an exemplar (but hardly the only such voice) of this early proto-sentimentalist school.



and, in particular, with humanity'.<sup>17</sup> An example of this can be found in Cudworth's sermon *The Life of Christ* (alternately titled *A Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons*). Here Cudworth writes of the divine spirit in each of us and the sympathy this creates between God and humans: 'where-ever it is, though never so little, like a sweet, young, tender, *Babe*, once born in any heart; when it crieth unto God the *father* of it, with pitifull and bemoaning looks imploring his compassion; it cannot chuse but move his *fatherly bowels*, and make them *yerne*, and turn towards it, and by strong sympathy, draw his compassionate arm to help and to relieve it'.<sup>18</sup> He continues in this vein, explaining that the 'expressions of goodnesse and tender affection here amongst his creatures be but drops of that full ocean that is in God'.<sup>19</sup>

I do not want to suggest that Cudworth is a straightforward sentimentalist. In fact, the traditional view of his place in the history of British moral philosophy positions him as a precursor to the rationalist intuitionism of Samuel Clarke and Richard Price. It is perhaps safest to view Cudworth as integrating aspects of both of these positions: in some texts he suggests that rational individuals are necessitated by reason to act according to moral laws, and elsewhere his emphasis is not merely on individual self-determination in moral matters, but self-determination motivated by specifically moral feelings.<sup>20</sup> For example, in his massive

<sup>17</sup> Herdt, 'The Rise of Sympathy', 372.

<sup>18</sup> Cudworth, *The Life of Christ*, 23.

<sup>19</sup> Cudworth, *The Life of Christ*, 24.

<sup>20</sup> Michael Gill has argued that this represents an ambiguity in Cudworth's views. Gill writes, 'Part of the explanation for Cudworth's not fitting squarely into the rationalist or sentimentalist camp is simply that at the time he was writing, the distinction had not yet been sharply formulated. But Cudworth also vacillated. In certain works, he implied that passion is the leading player in the righteous life, and that rationality plays a relatively minor role. In other works, he implied that rationality is essential, and that passion is dispensable' (Gill, 'Rationalism, Sentimentalism, and Ralph Cudworth', 150) Stephen Darwall also discusses the role of sentiments like love and benevolence in Cudworth's morality, suggesting that Cudworth's view is 'fundamentally an ethics of motive and character rather than one of duty and law'.

work *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, Cudworth writes that ‘the holy scripture...tells us plainly...what is that highest perfection of intellectual beings, which is...*better than reason and knowledge*, and which is also the source, life and soul of all morality...is love or charity’.<sup>21</sup> Without love, we are ‘destitute of all morality, virtue, and grace’.<sup>22</sup> So, for a rational individual, moral conduct is not merely a matter intuiting moral truths. It is equally a matter of being moved to act based on morally appropriate sentiments.

Cudworth’s sermon *The Life of Christ* is particularly illuminating again in this regard. There Cudworth repeatedly lionizes the individual who *feels* the sway of religious doctrine over those who have a purely intellectual grasp of their religious duties. The latter he describes in vivid terms, as people who know ‘Cold theorems and maximes, dry and jejune disputes’, but who never have the ‘least glympse of true heavenly light, the least sap of saving knowledge in any heart’.<sup>23</sup> For Cudworth, religious truths are only fully understood when they are appreciated heart and soul. True religiosity, like true obedience, requires more than knowing what one ought to do. Indeed, it involves more than even doing what one knows ought to be done. As he explains in his sermon, ‘I do not...mean by *holiness*, the mere performance of outward duties of religion, coldly acted over as a task...but I

(Darwall, *British Moralists*, 129) Darwall argues that Cudworth, like many other thinkers in this period, simply did not foresee that there might be a problem of conflicting motivations arising from sentiments, on the one hand, and moral principles like justice or honesty, on the other. Another noteworthy discussion of Cudworth is found in Sarah Hutton’s recent work, in which she suggests that Cudworth drew both from the Platonic tradition and from Descartes’ work on the passions. This resulted in a view that reason and sentiment work together unproblematically to produce an ‘affective reason’ that actually motivates moral action. (Hutton, ‘From Cudworth to Hume’, 10–11) I do not have space here to discuss whether or not there are real tensions in Cudworth’s view, as Gill wants to argue, but wish only to underscore Cudworth’s commitment to a nascent form of sentimentalism.

<sup>21</sup> Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, 205.

<sup>22</sup> Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, 205.

<sup>23</sup> Cudworth, *The Life of Christ*, 3.

mean an inward *soul* and *principle of divine life*, that spiriteth all these; that enliveneth and quickeneth, the dead carcasse, of all our outward performances whatsoever'.<sup>24</sup> In no uncertain terms, Cudworth equates mechanical rule-following with a form of servitude: it 'subjects us to a *state of bondage*'.<sup>25</sup> Freedom, for Cudworth, lies in acting from reasons internal to the agent, from acting according to 'an inward *self-moving* principle, living in our hearts'.<sup>26</sup> For Cudworth, living obediently on the basis of external considerations makes us no more than 'little puppets that skip nimbly up an down, and seem to be full of quick and sprightly motion, whereas they are all the while moved artificially by certain wiers and strings from without, and not by any principle of motion, from themselves within'.<sup>27</sup> The kinds of external considerations he cites are, first, the eternal rewards and punishments God has attached to his moral laws, and second, purely rational attention to God's revealed laws in scripture (effectively dealing a blow to both egoistic hedonists and strict rationalists). For Cudworth, obedience driven by such considerations is hollow: it is acting well but not freely.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Cudworth, *The Life of Christ*, 50.

<sup>25</sup> Cudworth, *The Life of Christ*, 50.

<sup>26</sup> Cudworth, *The Life of Christ*, 51.

<sup>27</sup> Cudworth, *The Life of Christ*, 51.

<sup>28</sup> This paper is not centrally aimed at establishing direct lines of influence between Cudworth and Locke on moral sentiment. However, I would suggest that there may well be grounds for making such an argument. The similarities between Locke and Cudworth on a great number of issues has prompted speculation from scholars that Cudworth may have been more than a little influential on Locke's thinking. John Passmore, for example, has pointed to a number of these similarities, including Locke's theory of the will, and the roles of desire and practical judgement in moral self-government (Passmore, *Cudworth*, 94). Passmore also suggests that Cudworth may well be the influence on Locke's move away from a strictly legislative morality in earlier works toward a psychology of self-determination in moral decision-making (Passmore, *Cudworth*, 92). Stephen Darwall has also argued that Locke's view of the centrality of practical judgment, his equation of liberty with self-determination, and his account of the suspension of the will, all bear uncanny resemblances to Cudworth's views (Darwall, *British Moralists*, 174–75). As Darwall and Passmore both acknowledge, direct textual evidence for Cudworth's influence on Locke does not exist, however,

The Latitudinarians who followed in Cudworth's wake further developed his ideas of internal spiritedness and emotion. Benevolence and sympathy between humans became a central theme for these thinkers, who also explored the Cudworthian idea of innate compassion. These themes are especially prominent in some of the thinkers with whom Locke was most impressed. As John Marshall noted in his article 'John Locke and the Latitudinarians', such prominent Latitudinarians as Barrow, Whichcote, Lloyd, Patrick and Tillotson make frequent appearances in Locke's journals and theological manuscripts.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, Locke did not hesitate to recommend these works to others. In a letter to Richard King, written in August 1703, Locke, in the course of recommending texts that might introduce his interlocutor to moral issues, states: 'if you desire a larger View of the Parts of Morality, I know not where you will find them so well and distinctly explain'd, and so strongly inforc'd as in the Practical Divines of the Church of England. The Sermons of Dr. Barrow, Archbishop Tillotson, and Dr. Whichcot, are masterpieces of this kind'.<sup>30</sup>

Just what were the core moral views of the Latitudinarians with whom Locke was familiar? R. S. Crane has identified four general themes regarding morality and benevolence that recur in a number of Latitudinarian texts. These are worth considering briefly in connection with the thinkers that particularly interested

there seems to be a great deal of indirect evidence, from the similarity of their views, bolstered by the personal, and intellectual, relationship Locke had with Cudworth's daughter Damaris Cudworth, Lady Masham. Passmore and Darwall do not discuss sentimentalist strains of influence from Cudworth, but I will venture to suggest that the sentimentalist language found in Locke's morality seems to bear a strong resemblance to that found in Cudworth, and is at least suggestive of the ideas we find in Cudworth's pivotal works on the subject of moral motivation and self-determination.

<sup>29</sup> Marshall, 'John Locke and Latitudinarianism', 254. Marshall, it is worth adding, also discusses, at some length, Locke's connections with the Latitudinarians in his book *John Locke: Resistance, Religion, and Responsibility*. Here he offers evidence that Locke very likely attended Whichcote's sermons when he was vicar of St. Lawrence Jewry (78–79).

<sup>30</sup> Locke, *Selected Correspondence*, 314.

Locke. Though Crane does not single out Locke's favorites for any special attention, I will focus my own discussion of Crane's themes specifically in terms of these thinkers.

Crane's first theme is the Latitudinarians' general commitment to the idea that virtue is defined by universal benevolence,<sup>31</sup> i.e., the idea that virtuous conduct is undertaken not merely out of love for God but out of good will towards other people. This idea is well illustrated in the work Benjamin Whichcote, whose work *The Perfection of the Mercy of God* was familiar to Locke. In that work, Whichcote relates righteousness and piety with good works and benevolence as follows:

General good Will, and Universal Love, and Charity, are the greatest, both Perfections and Acts of Power. To be ready to forgive, and to be easy to be reconciled are things that are grafted, not in the Wilderness of the World, but in the most noble and generous Natures. They are under the fullest Communication of God that give themselves up to Acts of Clemency and Compassion, and are forward to relieve, and to do good, to pardon and to forgive. These are the Persons that are endued with Divine Power.<sup>32</sup>

Whichcote continues in this vein, emphasizing love as the principal motivation for the righteous: 'They who are indeed acquainted with God, and naturalized to him, they live in a Spirit of hearty Love and universal good Will'.<sup>33</sup> Another example of this thinking is found in John Tillotson, according to whom the virtues of a good life include humility, meekness, patience and 'a readiness to forgive our enemies, and an universal love and kindness to all men'.<sup>34</sup> These, Tillotson continues, are 'the will of God...the proper and genuine Effects of true Piety'.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Crane, 'Suggestions toward a Genealogy', 208.

<sup>32</sup> Whichcote, *Several Discourses*, 45.

<sup>33</sup> Whichcote, *Several Discourses*, 46.

<sup>34</sup> Tillotson, *Fifteen sermons*, 38.

<sup>35</sup> Tillotson, *Fifteen Sermons*, 39.

A second general theme identified by Crane is that of benevolence as a *feeling*.<sup>36</sup> For the Latitudinarians, the moral value of the benevolent and charitable works Christians perform pertains not merely to the actions themselves but also to the kinds of passions that motivate them. Tillotson and Whichcote, as we saw above, speak of love and compassion as proper motivations for the Christian. In his sermon ‘The Pleasantness of Religion’, Barrow also emphasizes the feelings that motivate good works. Since we are all children of God, he argues, and all share the same human nature, we ‘are endowed with like faculties of mind, passions of soul, shape of body, and sense of things: that we have equally implanted in our original constitution inclinations to love, pity, gratitude, sociableness...[and] that to those, to whom our natural condition hath by so many bands of cognition, similitude and mutual necessitude, hath knit and conjoined us, we should bear a kind of respect and tender affection...should heartily wish and industriously promote their good’.<sup>37</sup> The nature of religion, for Barrow, consists not in ‘fair professions and glorious pretences’, but in ‘a sincere love of goodness...exerting it self in works of true Devotion and Charity’.<sup>38</sup> Simon Patrick, in his work, *The Christian Sacrifice*, urges all Christians to remember that they are of one body with Christ, and therefore ought to ‘live in unity and godly love’. He continues by reminding Christians that ‘Love, or brotherly charity is the fulfilling of the Law...[i]f our hearts were filled with it, we should not only be preserved from doing [others] harm, but it would make us do [them] good’.<sup>39</sup>

The third general theme identified by Crane is that benevolent feelings are *natural*.<sup>40</sup> Barrow, for one, makes the case for the

<sup>36</sup> Crane, ‘Suggestions toward a Genealogy’, 214.

<sup>37</sup> Barrow, *The Works*, 6.

<sup>38</sup> Barrow, *The Works*, 7.

<sup>39</sup> Patrick, *The Christian Sacrifice*, 78.

<sup>40</sup> Crane, ‘Suggestions toward a Genealogy’, 220.

naturalness of benevolence in many of his works. A typical passage is found in his ‘Sermon upon the Passion of our Blessed Saviour’, wherein he argues that because Jesus was a human, born of woman, he was ‘endued with an human compassion and with a fraternal affection toward all men; hence he was disposed to extend the benefit of charitable and gracious performances unto them all’.<sup>41</sup> Elsewhere, in his sermon ‘Of a Peacable Temper and Carriage’, he explains that the love of benevolence is ‘deeply rooted in nature’ and ‘the duties mentioned consequent on it, are grounded upon the natural constitution, necessary properties, and unalterable condition of humanity’.<sup>42</sup>

Crane’s fourth theme consists is the idea of virtue as carrying a self-approving joy,<sup>43</sup> with virtue seen as inherently pleasant—virtuous acts carry with them a natural feeling of goodness. Crane offers a quote from Isaac Barrow that is worth repeating here as an encapsulation of this view. In his 1671 sermon, *The duty and reward of bounty to the poor*, he writes

as nature, to the acts requisite toward preservation of our life, hath annexed a sensible pleasure, forcibly enticing us to the performance of them: so hath she made the communication of benefit to others to be accompanied with a very delicious relish upon the mind of him that practices it, nothing indeed carrying with it a more pure and savoury delight than beneficence<sup>44</sup>

Whichcote, in a similar vein, writes that ‘Virtue hath *Reward* arising out of *itself*: so Sin and Wickedness hath *Punishment*. Nothing in the World so draws on another thing, as *Guilt* doth Mischief and Punishment. Wickedness is contrary to the Nature of Man: Therefore cannot but be vexatious and tormenting. No Wounds of Body, equal the Torments of the Mind’.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Barrow, *The Works*, 349.

<sup>42</sup> Barrow, *The Works*, 288.

<sup>43</sup> Crane, ‘Suggestions toward a Genealogy’, 227.

<sup>44</sup> Crane, ‘Suggestions toward a Genealogy’, 228.

<sup>45</sup> Whichcote, *Select Sermons*, 109.

The general picture that emerges out of these Latitudinarian themes is one that emphasizes the inherently moral nature of human beings. For these thinkers, humans are naturally motivated, in their characteristically Christian and moral conduct, by love and a commitment to charity, by feelings of good will towards others, and by the happiness that comes with doing one's moral duty. Moreover, the complex of sentiments that subtends true moral conduct is not a morally extrinsic feature. Rather, it is part and parcel of the Christian moral character that conduct should be animated by the moral sentiments toward which humans are inclined. In turning now to Locke, I hope to show that these themes are well represented in various aspects of Lockean moral philosophy.

## **§2. Sentiment in Locke's moral theory**

In a 1688 essay, entitled *Pacific Christians*, Locke lays out a set of guiding principles for a religious society. One of the principles he enumerates reads as follows: 'We hold it to be an indispensable duty for all Christians to maintain love and charity in the diversity of contrary opinions. By which charity we do not mean an empty sound, but an effectual forbearance and good will, carrying men to communion, friendship and mutual assistance one of another, in outward as well as spiritual things'.<sup>46</sup> True Christianity would seem to require, for Locke, more than mere obedience to divine law but a motivation to benevolence arising from internal feelings of love and good will. The emphasis here is on the character of the true Christian, and this character is defined in terms of distinctly moral sentiments. The emphasis on benevolence and charity in Locke's conception of the noble and Christian moral character surfaces in a number of places in Locke's writings. However, while such themes play an important role in Locke's thinking about morality (as I shall argue), their role in his broader picture of morality is complicated, and it is important not to overestimate their centrality.

<sup>46</sup> Locke, 'Pacific Christians', 305.



What warns against treating moral sentiment as forming the core of Locke's moral philosophy is the character of his general theory of motivation, for that theory is indeed hedonistic. For Locke, feelings of pleasure or pain are joined to virtually all of our ideas and actions. Consequently, if we had no perception of delight, 'we should have no reason to prefer one Thought or Action, to another; Negligence, to Attention; or Motion, to Rest' (*E* II.vii.3, 129) Locke ties this general theory of motivation to his conceptions of morality and natural law in a number of places. For example, in his essay entitled *Of Ethic in General* (c. 1686–8), Locke writes that sanctions are the means by which superiors enforce the laws, 'it being impossible to set any other motive or restraint to the actions of a free understanding agent but the consideration of good or evil; that is, pleasure or pain that will follow from it'.<sup>47</sup> In the *Essay*, Locke ties his specific conceptions of moral good and evil to those of good and evil, generically understood: Divine law is 'the only true touchstone of *moral Rectitude*; and by comparing them to this Law, it is, that Men judge of the most considerable *Moral good* or *Evil* of their Actions; that is, whether as *Duties*, or *Sins*, they are like to procure them happiness, or misery, from the hands of the ALMIGHTY' (*E* II.xxviii.8, 352) In this and like passages, Locke's hedonistic externalism shows itself clearly: reward and punishment are a species of pleasure and pain that gain a distinctively moral character only from their connection with the authoritative decrees of a rightful legislator. The motivating force of morality seems to arise from external considerations alone, and the agent's deliberations therefore seem to amount to nothing more than considerations of private utility.

The difficulty, then, is to square what Locke says on behalf of this general theory of motivation with what emerges in those texts that express his commitment to the normative and motivational force of specifically *moral* sentiments. As we shall see, Locke's commitment to the idea that morality finds its most noble expression when motivated by the specifically moral feelings of

<sup>47</sup> Locke, 'Of Ethic in General', 301.

benevolence and love is steady and unflinching. What I want to argue in what follows is that it is precisely this commitment that prevents Locke's general motivational hedonism from collapsing into a crude externalism with respect to moral motivation. Locke's hedonism is *general* in the sense that it views *all* conduct as ultimately motivated by considerations of pleasure and pain, but some of these considerations involve, I shall argue, specifically *moral* pleasures and pains, in keeping with both the Lockean ideal of Christian character with which this section began, and with the Latitudinarian views of natural, moral sentiment explored in the last.<sup>48</sup>

In a 1692 essay, known as *Ethica A*, Locke describes the pleasure that arises from acting benevolently and out of moral duty. Locke says 'Whoever spared a meal to save the life of a starving man, much more a friend, which all men are to us whom we love, but had more and much more lasting pleasure in it than he that eat it. The other's pleasure died as he eat and ended with his meal. But to him that gave it him 'tis a feast as often as he reflects on it'.<sup>49</sup> For Locke, the pleasure the agent feels from acting charitably (and from his subsequent reflections upon the act) is not simply the pleasure of expected reward, for in the same

<sup>48</sup> I do not want to suggest that sentiment is the only, or even the central, aspect of Locke's account of moral life. However, as regards moral motivation, sentiment clearly plays a role (and one I would suggest that has been somewhat overlooked in the scholarship). For Locke virtuous conduct requires reasoning well, perhaps first and foremost; without reason, there is no moral agency, no real decision-making in any meaningful sense of the term. In the *Essay*, Locke makes this quite clear when he writes 'Man is put under a necessity by his constitution, as an intelligent being, to be determined in *willing* by his own Thought and Judgment, what is best for him to do; else he would be under the determination of some other than himself, which is want of Liberty. And to deny, that a Man's *will*, in every determination, follows his own Judgment, is to say, that a Man *wills* and acts for an end he would have at the time that he *wills* and acts for it' (*E* II.xxi.48). My discussion here focuses on motivation, however. For Locke, the will is not moved by considerations of reason alone, but directly by our desires, or uneasinesses, for perceived goods, which 'give the will its next determination' (*E* II.xxi.46). My aim in this paper is to explore the range of goods Locke has in mind in moral cases, and to suggest that in matters of moral decision-making the desire for intrinsically *moral* goods can move us to act.

<sup>49</sup> Locke, 'Ethica A', 319.

essay Locke describes such pleasures as being independent of the pleasures of the afterlife. Locke explicitly characterizes the necessity for divine rewards and punishments as arising from the fact that there are those who would *deny* that happiness attaches directly to acts fulfilling the duties of love and charity:

Happiness... is annexed to our loving others and to our doing our duty, to acts of love and charity, or he that will deny it be so here because everyone observes not this rule of universal love and charity, he brings in a necessity of another life (wherein God may put a distinction between those that did good and suffered and those who did evil and enjoyed by their different treatment there) and so enforces morality the stronger, laying a necessity on God's justice by his rewards and punishments, to make the good the gainers, the wicked losers.<sup>50</sup>

The suggestion here is that those who fail to recognize the specific kind of happiness attending righteous acts need the alternative incentive of external goods in the form of divine rewards and/or the avoidance of divine punishment. But it is clear that such extrinsic forms of motivation are normatively secondary to the happiness intrinsic to acts of love and charity. In this same essay, Locke characterizes the pleasures attending righteousness as 'the most lasting' and he continues by asking, rhetorically, 'whoever was so brutish as would not quit the greatest sensual pleasure to save a child's life whom he loves? What is this but pleasure of thought remote from any sensual delight? Love all the world as you do your child or self and make this universal, and how much short will it make the earth of heaven'.<sup>51</sup>

Locke writes at some length about love in one of his minor essays, on 'Pleasure, Pain and the Passions' (1676), and what he says is especially interesting for the story I am trying to tell here, since it reflects on love in connection with both extrinsic and intrinsic pleasures. He begins by describing love as '[having] in our mind the idea of something which we consider as capable to

<sup>50</sup> Locke, 'Ethica A', 319.

<sup>51</sup> Locke, 'Ethica A', 319.

produce satisfaction or delight in us'.<sup>52</sup> This may seem a fairly straightforward account of love as involving extrinsic pleasures, and Locke's discussion does include examples along such lines. For example, he cites the man who loves the smell of roses and the taste of wine because they bring him pleasure. This is a love aimed at particular objects of desire and our love extends only so far as these objects continue to satisfy us—we do not love things for themselves, but for the continual pleasure over time that they can give us. For Locke, it is possible to love even our friends in this manner, though, in such cases, '[it] is not truly love of their persons, but a care to preserve, with their persons, those good things which [we] do love and which we cannot have without them'.<sup>53</sup> However, Locke goes on to describe a finer kind of love that is better coordinated with the notion of love as a Christian virtue. This kind of love is felt, he writes, by 'wise minds...of a nobler constitution'.<sup>54</sup> The experience of love in some people, he explains, involves 'pleasure in the very being and the happiness of their friends', and those 'yet of a more excellent make [are] delighted with the existence and happiness of all good men, some with that of all mankind in general, and this last may be said properly to love'.<sup>55</sup> For Locke, then, such refinements of love involve moving away from considerations of private utility to considerations of the inherent value of others, for it is precisely the 'existence and happiness' of others that are the proper objects of such love and, consequently, the source of the satisfaction we take in discharging the Christian duty to love others.

While it is important to note that nothing in Locke's account of love involves any compromise of his generally hedonistic account of motivation—i.e., love in all of its forms is pursued for the sake of the pleasures and satisfactions it brings us—it is equally

<sup>52</sup> Locke, 'Pleasure, Pain, the Passions', 238.

<sup>53</sup> Locke, 'Pleasure, Pain, the Passions', 239.

<sup>54</sup> Locke, 'Pleasure, Pain, the Passions', 239.

<sup>55</sup> Locke, 'Pleasure, Pain, the Passions', 239.

important to recognize the moral dimension that specifically attaches to the refined kind of love. For Locke, the satisfactions attending this kind of love are not extrinsic to our relationship with what is loved. Rather, the satisfaction consists precisely *in* our affinity for what is loved. It is in this sense that Locke describes love as the ‘principle and first [of] all passions’, to be distinguished from other kinds of desire because it is ‘not moved till you propose something that is *in itself* delightful’<sup>56</sup> (emphasis added). Though we might desire certain things as mere means to further ends, love ‘fixes only upon an end and never embraces any object purely as serviceable to some other purpose, nor could it be otherwise, since it is a *sympathy of the soul* and is nothing but the union of the mind with the idea of something that has a secret faculty to delight it’ (emphasis added).<sup>57</sup>

Locke’s characterization of love as a ‘sympathy of the soul’ that fixes on an object that is ‘in itself’ delightful is, I would suggest, a fairly clear evocation of the Latitudinarian emphasis on moral sentiment explored in the previous section. Equally telling is Locke’s contention that it is those who delight in the ‘existence and happiness’ of ‘all of mankind’ that are most properly said to love. As we have seen, at the core of Latitudinarian moral doctrine is the view that universal benevolence is expressed as a feeling, and that this feeling equates to a self-approving joy in those who are moved by its impulses. I think it is plausible to suppose that Locke saw in doctrines of this sort a recipe for integrating ideals of Christian morality within his generally hedonistic account of motivation. Even if all of our actions are ultimately motivated by satisfactions we see as ensuing from them, there is still room for a robust ideal of Christian morality if some of the envisioned satisfactions are attainable only through the exercise of distinctively *moral* sentiments.

The idea that morally appropriate sentiment is integral to properly Christian conduct is also evident in Locke’s *Letter*

<sup>56</sup> Locke, ‘Pleasure, Pain, the Passions’, 239.

<sup>57</sup> Locke, ‘Pleasure, Pain, the Passions’, 239.

*Concerning Toleration*, where he paints a picture of the true Christian as being more than merely an express believer or even someone who acts to promote the Christian faith. For Locke, true Christianity involves an emotional commitment comprising the entire character of the individual: ‘it is impossible that those should sincerely and heartily apply themselves to make other People Christians who have not really embraced the Christian Religion in their own Hearts. If the Gospel and the Apostles be credited, no Man can be a Christian without *Charity*, and without *that Faith which works*, not by Force, but by *Love*. Now I appeal to the Consciences of those that persecute, torment, destroy, and kill other Men upon pretence of Religion, whether they do it out of Friendship and Kindness towards them, or no’.<sup>58</sup> In another instance, Locke speaks of doctrinal Christians who lay claim to the orthodoxy and antiquity of their faith, commenting ‘Let any one have never so true a Claim to all these things, yet if he be destitute of Charity, Meekness, and Good-will in general towards all Mankind, even to those that are not Christians, he is certainly yet short of being a true Christian himself’.<sup>59</sup> Here again, Locke would seem to be invoking the Latitudinarian ideals of good will and universal love as appropriate moral motivations for Christians. Indeed, he takes these ideals to be constitutive of ‘true’ Christian faith.

If it is plausible to suppose that Locke imbibed significant aspects of the Latitudinarian picture of Christian morality as animated by morally appropriate sentiment, it remains true that Locke’s broader moral perspective includes an account of morality in terms of natural law, and an acknowledgement of the centrality of a system of divine rewards and punishments as appropriate inducements to obedience. It remains to be seen, then, how Locke’s Latitudinarian affinities are to be reconciled with this more ‘legalistic’ strain in his moral outlook. I have argued above that both of these aspects take their place under the rubric

<sup>58</sup> Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, 23.

<sup>59</sup> Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, 23.

of Locke's generally hedonistic theory of moral motivation, and that it is Locke's integration of the Latitudinarian outlook specifically that keeps that theory from collapsing into the kind of crude motivational externalism that is sometimes attributed to him. However, there is more to be said about the relationship between the legalistic and Latitudinarian dimensions of Locke's outlook.

### **§3. Natural Law and the Satisfactions of Morality**

We noted at the outset that Locke is committed both to a view of morality expressed as natural law, and view of divine sanctions as providing inducements to comply with natural law's dictates. For Locke, again, '*Morally Good and Evil*...is only the Conformity or Disagreement of our voluntary Actions to some Law, whereby Good or Evil is drawn on us, from the Will and Power of the Law-maker' (*E*, II.xxviii.5, 351). In the case of natural law, the relevant law-maker is, of course, God, and it is also from its origin in God as an authoritative superior that natural law derives its obligatory force. For Locke, the idea of morality being promulgated as natural law depends on the association of law with sanctions. As he puts it, '[i]t would be in vain for one intelligent Being to set a Rule to the Actions of another, if he had it not in his Power, to reward the compliance with, and punish deviation from his Rule, by some Good and Evil, that is not the natural product and consequence of the Action itself' (*E*, II.xxviii.6, 351). It is therefore crucial to Locke's moral perspective that compliance with the dictates of morality *can be* motivated by considerations of divine reward and punishment, for the very notion of morality *as* natural law depends upon the efficacy of a system of sanctions in regulating moral conduct. However, if the considerations discussed above are on the right track, it is unlikely that Locke saw the motivations associable with divine sanctions as exhausting the inducements to moral conduct. In this section, I want to explore some of the ways in which Locke's Latitudinarian leanings serve to enrich the picture of moral motivation associable with his natural law view of morality.

One of the ways in which Locke's view of motivation builds complexity upon the legalism of his natural law theory is in his account of the very notion *happiness*. In the *Essay*, at II.xxi.51 (266), Locke explains that 'the highest perfection of intellectual nature, lies in a careful and constant pursuit of *true* and *solid* happiness; so the care of our selves, that we mistake not imaginary for real happiness, is the necessary foundation of our *liberty*' (my emphasis). For Locke, the pursuit of 'true and solid' happiness is part and parcel of what it means to be a free, rational creature. He amplifies on this point at *E* II.xxi.70 (281), where he claims that 'he that will not be so far a rational Creature, as to reflect seriously upon infinite Happiness and Misery, must needs condemn himself, as not making that use of his Understanding he should'. Locke's reference here to infinite happiness and misery would seem to imply, at least, the rewards of heaven and the punishments of hell attached to the obedience to or transgressions of God's laws. However, that the happiness of divine reward cannot be all that he has in mind is strongly suggested by his acknowledgement of the limitations of external rewards as appropriate motivations to moral conduct. He states, for example, 'Let a man be never so well perswaded of the advantages of virtue, that is as necessary to a Man, who has great aims in this World, or hopes in the next, as food to life: yet till he *hungers and thirsts after righteousness*; till he feels an *uneasiness* in the want of it, his *will* not be determin'd to any action in pursuit of this confessed greater good' (*E*, II.xxi.35, 253). The suggestion here is clearly that the anticipation of rewards in either this world or in the afterlife will be insufficient to determine the will to moral conduct in the absence of any appetite for righteousness itself. Indeed, reason enjoins not only that we seek happiness, but that we cultivate an appetite for the *right kinds* of happiness, which, in turn, involves exercising a proper regard for the moral worth of the objects we seek: '[W]e should take pains to suit the relish of our Minds to the true intrinsick good or ill, that is in things; and not permit an allow'd or supposed possible great and weighty good to slip out of our thoughts, without leaving any relish, any desire of it self there, till, by a due consideration of its true worth,



we have formed appetites in our minds suitable to it, and made our selves uneasy in the want of it' (*E*, II.xxi.53, 268)

The idea that morality is served by the cultivation of specifically moral appetites is a prominent theme in Locke's pronouncements on moral motivation. In the 1692 essay 'Ethica B', Locke explains that there are 'two parts to ethics, the one is the rule which men are generally right in, though perhaps they have not deduced them as they should from their true principles. The other is the true motives to practice them and the ways to bring men to observe them, and these are generally either not well known or not rightly applied'.<sup>60</sup> As regards the second part, concerning motivation, Locke claims that agents cannot be truly moral until they are 'made alive to virtue and can taste it'.<sup>61</sup> Recognizing that one may be driven by desires and passions not directed toward virtue, or, indeed, directed against it, Locke explains that the cultivation of virtuous appetite may take 'all the prevalencies of friendship, all the arts of persuasion, [so that one] is to be brought to live the contrary course'.<sup>62</sup> For the man in whom such appetite is lacking, Locke explains 'You must bring him to practice in particular instances, and so by habits establish a contrary pleasure, and then when conscience, reason, and pleasure go together they are sure to prevail'.<sup>63</sup> It is clear from this that Locke understands proper moral motivation not strictly in terms of the crude externalism of rewards and punishments. Rather, proper motivation involves pleasures derived in the very pursuit of moral conduct. Only in the successful cultivation of such pleasures is one made fully 'alive to virtue'.

In reviewing Locke's observations on the connections between understanding, freedom, and the happiness toward which both ideally tend, it is hard to avoid comparing Locke with Cudworth.

<sup>60</sup> Locke, 'Ethica B', 319.

<sup>61</sup> Locke, 'Ethica B', 320.

<sup>62</sup> Locke, 'Ethica B', 320.

<sup>63</sup> Locke, 'Ethica B', 320.

Recall that for Cudworth, the individual is free only if she performs her duties of religion from an ‘inward soul and principle of divine life’, as contrasted with the person ‘in bondage’ who merely performs her duties ‘coldly, as a task’. Cudworth sees the fear of punishment supplying a motive, at best, for those who pursue moral conduct coldly, as a calculated task, and it is clear that he regards it as a debasement of the moral telos of free and rational beings to suppose that they are capable of fulfilling the moral law only by means of such inducement. Locke, I suggest, thinks similarly. Though more open than Cudworth to the idea of rewards and punishments as appropriate moral motivations, he nevertheless questions their ultimate efficacy as inducements to morality, claiming, as we have seen, that they cannot adequately serve in lieu of appropriate appetites for moral ends as such. It is, I think, plausible to suppose that Locke viewed such appetites as consisting in the varieties of moral sentiment so strongly emphasized in the Latitudinarian literature with which he was familiar—sentiments of love and charity, and the self-approving joy that attends conduct undertaken on their basis. If, as seems likely, Locke did not intend his notion of ‘true and solid happiness’ to be exhausted in the notion of eternal (external) reward associated with his natural law theory, we can at least appreciate how Latitudinarian conceptions of moral sentiment would have found favour with him. Like Cudworth and the later Latitudinarians, Locke maintains that morality can be, and ideally *should be*, pursued on the basis of satisfactions *intrinsic* to moral virtue, and it is a task set to all free and rational beings that they should cultivate the taste for such satisfactions.

No less than the Latitudinarians, Locke thinks of the disposition toward moral virtue as *natural*, at least in the sense that he takes the full realization of our natures as free, rational beings to involve the development of the moral appetite for virtue. However, Locke also views the realization of virtuous dispositions as somewhat precarious, and much of his thought on moral education concerns the ways and means of cultivating moral sentiments appropriate to virtue.

In his 1692 work *Some Thoughts on Education*, for instance,

Locke makes very clear that the best education is one that builds virtuous character, not by means of rewards and punishments that feed the baser hedonistic motivations of our natures, but by practice and habit that builds on the better part of our natures, that part of us that is kind, generous and charitable. He writes, ‘Every man must some Time or other be trusted to himself, and his own Conduct; and he that is a good, a vertuous and able Man, *must be made so within*. And therefore, what he is to receive from Education, what is to sway and influence his Life, must be something put into him betimes; Habits woven into the very Principles of his Nature’.<sup>64</sup> It is interesting to note that in this context, Locke evinces considerable skepticism as to the value of corporal punishment as a means of instilling morality in the young. Corporal punishment, he explains, ‘contributes not at all to the mastery of our Natural Propensity to indulge Corporal and present Pleasure, and to avoid Pain at any rate, but rather encourages it, and thereby strengthens that in us, which is the root from whence spring all Vitious Actions, and the Irregularities of Life’.<sup>65</sup> For Locke, far more effective as tools for the early inculcation of moral probity are the sentiments of shame and regret that a child can be brought to feel in the wake of moral error. As he puts it, ‘I cannot think any Correction useful to a Child, where the Shame of Suffering for having done Amiss, does not work more upon him than the Pain’.<sup>66</sup>

Views such as these would seem to militate against the idea that Locke sees moral motivation as consisting only in the crudest kinds of external sanctions—i.e., those consisting in corporal rewards and punishments. However, it is equally clear that Locke *does* see rewards, of a sort at least, as playing a substantial role in the process of morally educating the young, for he takes it that the very task of inculcating moral sentiment is helped along by bestowing praise and credit appropriately. For instance, Locke

<sup>64</sup> Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, 110, emphasis added.

<sup>65</sup> Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, 112.

<sup>66</sup> Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, 113.

claims that in teaching a child veneration for his parents, ‘which consists in Love and Esteem’, one should ‘make [the Principles of good Nature and Kindness] as habitual as you can, by Credit and Commendation, and the good Things accompanying that State’.<sup>67</sup> Indeed, Locke takes it that a well chosen regimen of praise and reward is instrumental both in teaching virtue and inculcating the moral sentiments that ideally accompany it:

Covetousness, and the desire of having in our possession and under our Dominion, more than we have need of, being the root of all Evil, should be early and carefully weeded out, and the contrary Quality of a readiness to impart to others, implanted. This should be encouraged by great Commendation and Credit, and constantly taking care, that [the child] loses nothing by his *Liberality*. Let all the Instances he gives of such freeness, be always repaid, and with interest; and let him sensibly perceive, that the Kindness he shews to others, is no ill husbandry for himself; but that it brings a return of Kindness both from those that receive it, and those who look on. Make this a Contest among Children, who shall out-do one another this way: And by this means, by a constant practice, Children having made it easie to themselves to part with what they have, good Nature may be settled in them into an habit, and they may take pleasure, and pique themselves in being *kind, liberal and civil*, to others.<sup>68</sup>

According to this passage, Lockean moral education clearly does grant a place to external reward, at least insofar as we may interpret Locke’s talk of ‘commendation and credit’ and *repaying* free acts of kindness ‘with interest’ as indicating such reward. However, it is noteworthy that Locke envisions the role of external rewards as being broadly *heuristic*. The idea is that external rewards are means to be taken in cultivating not only the habit of virtuous action, but also the specific varieties of pleasure to be had from acting virtuously—that the young should learn to ‘take pleasure, and pique themselves in being *kind, liberal and civil*, to others’.

What Locke has to say about the role of external rewards and

<sup>67</sup> Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, 125.

<sup>68</sup> Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, 170.

punishments in the context of early moral education comports well with what we have already seen regarding his views on the importance of divine sanctions. Recall that, for Locke, happiness is ‘annexed to our loving others and to our doing our duty, to acts of love and charity’, but since not all are dependably moved by the happiness attendant upon moral conduct, there is ‘a necessity of another life (wherein God may put a distinction between those that did good and suffered and those who did evil and enjoyed...) and so enforces morality the stronger’.<sup>69</sup> Again, Locke’s idea seems to be that reward and punishment in the afterlife operate as moral motivators largely in those cases where agents are insufficiently moved by varieties of happiness typically attendant upon moral conduct *per se*. To whatever degree the satisfactions of morality are precarious in individual characters or with respect to specific courses of action, there remain the inducements of external rewards and punishments in the afterlife to encourage agents toward virtue and thus ‘[enforce] morality the stronger’. Nor is it far fetched to think that Locke would take this kind of external inducement as conducive to the development and stabilisation of appropriate moral sentiments in the individual, since, as his views on education show, Locke does allow that external motivations can play an instrumental role in the development of a mature moral character. What is clear, however, is that Locke is by no means committed to the view that external motivations, in the form of rewards and punishments, are the *only* inducements to morality operative in conscientious moral agents. On the contrary, Locke is firmly committed to the view that a mature moral agent is and should be actuated by moral sentiments conducive to virtue as such—sentiments that register the internal satisfactions of moral living.

#### **§4. Conclusion**

The interpretation developed here accords a far lesser role to external sanctions in moral motivation than is proposed on some of the interpretations discussed at the outset—e.g. those of

<sup>69</sup> Locke, ‘Ethica A’, 319.

Darwall and Colman. For these authors, Locke is strongly committed to a motivational externalism based on divine reward and punishment because he divorces the obligating force of natural law from the motivational force that induces the moral agent to comply with its dictates. This view rightly recognizes the generality of Locke's motivational hedonism. What I have tried to show, however, is that interpretations of this sort fail to take account of another prominent strain in Locke's thinking on moral motivation. This is the strain that emphasizes moral sentiment and what we may rightly regard as the *internal* satisfactions of a morally virtuous life. In keeping with the Latitudinarian views he commended, Locke emphasizes kindness, charity and love as sentiments that rightly animate our propensities toward virtue. In keeping with Locke's hedonism, the exercise and satisfaction of these sentiments *is* a kind of pleasure, but it is a pleasure taken *in* the regard for others that virtue requires, not taken *from* it. Ideally, it is also the kind of pleasure that moves us to virtuous conduct for its own sake, which is why it would be misleading to characterize its motivational force in purely externalist terms.

I have also suggested that Locke acknowledges a limited role for rewards and punishments in his account of moral motivation, so it may be as inadvisable to consider him a pure internalist as it is to consider him a pure externalist. However, in closing, it is perhaps worth pointing out that Locke's frequent emphasis on rewards and punishments in connection with his natural law theory may have a rationale quite apart from his views on moral motivation. As a natural law theorist, Locke is obviously committed to the view that morality is promulgated to us *as* law, and this, for Locke, *implies* that there should be rewards and punishments. Again, Locke takes moral good and evil to consist in 'the Conformity or Disagreement of our voluntary Actions to some Law, *whereby Good or Evil is drawn on us, from the Will and Power of the Law-maker*' (*E*, II.xxviii.5, 351, my emphasis), and he maintains that there could be no purpose for any being to lay down a law to others 'if he had it not in his Power, to reward the compliance with, and punish deviation from his Rule' (*E*, II.xxviii.6, 352).

Such comments are clearly as much about the obligatory force of law *qua* law as they are about moral motivation. It would indeed be rash to suggest that Locke's emphasis on reward and punishment says nothing about moral motivation, but it is, I believe, equally rash to suppose that it captures Locke's view of moral motivation *in toto*. To suppose this would be to render mysterious Locke's considerable affinities for the Latitudinarian thinkers with whom he was familiar. By contrast, the views of Cockburn and Tuveson, with which we began, pave the way to understanding these affinities by recognizing a substantive sentimentalist strain in Locke's moral thought. It is hoped that the present essay takes some steps toward developing this view, thereby deepening our understanding of Locke's relationship to the Latitudinarian thought of his time.

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